

LETTERS.

Pioneer Club,
9, Park Place, S.W.,
April 2nd, 1915.

DEAR EDITOR,

Not long ago, when trying to find a governess for a lady who cannot afford more than £50 per annum, I came across the following advertisement :

"Lady, 25, Froebel trained, seeks post to prepare boy for school; Ambleside method if desired. £36 per annum, etc., etc."

I answered this, and received in return a nice letter and two leaflets about the P.U.S. (D and G), which were to explain the Ambleside method to me.

I did not continue the correspondence, as the lady did not teach Latin, and I do not give her name, as the advertisement is only one of many. At the risk, however, of appearing a most mercenary person, I should like to point out that, at the present time when in many cases the governess's salary is the first "luxury" to be dispensed with, announcements such as the one to which I refer are not likely to help towards upholding the Ambleside standard of pay.

I am not thinking of the many people who know all about Ambleside, but of the many who know of it by hearsay only; the latter know perhaps that the method is good, and that they cannot get the governesses trained at Scale How for less than £70 or £80 per annum, and here is a lady who will do all they desire (and is Froebel trained into the bargain!) for £36.

During the last few years I have come across several quite wealthy people who have had these ladies "who teach on the Ambleside method, and who do not ask nearly such high salaries," and it seems to me that when posts are scarce it

is a pity there is no way of preventing such advertisements as the one which I have taken as an example.

I believe that in many cases where the Ambleside method is used by untrained teachers the result is chaotic, and therefore the method is most unfairly condemned. This is naturally unfortunate, for there is no subject so much discussed by the mothers of the present day as that of the different methods of education.—I am yours, etc.,

F. M. OLIVER.

Fittleworth, Sussex,
April 15th.

DEAR MISS MASON,

I received the above letter this morning, and felt I would like you to see it before publication. Miss Oliver is a stranger to me personally, but I thought it was common knowledge that the larger proportion of P.U.S. children are taught by non-students. And surely many non-students teach P.U.S. children very well, don't they? They have always seemed to me to exist for those families who cannot afford the "real thing," and rather to add to the responsibility of being a "real thing"!

I wonder if it is true that people are, as suggested in the above letter, getting rid of students because of the hard times. I know of one lady who has done so, but she told me herself that the *real* reason was that the student was not "worth it"—too lazy, she said. Perhaps we students don't, as a body, realize what an expense we are to our "postesses," and should rouse ourselves to make every effort, that we may be considered well worth every penny of our salary. For we ought not to lower the salary, ought we?

Is it asking too much of you that you would comment on the letter, and so tell us all what you think about it?—Yours, etc.,

HELEN E. WIX.

Scale How, Ambleside,
April 19th, 1915.

DEAR EDITOR,

Thank you for your letter and enclosure.

As you say, the only remedy is in the hands of the students, and it is an ample one, for they have a power of filling their pupils' out-of-school lives with interests and joys which outsiders can hardly compete with.

Also, it is upon them we depend to carry out the principles of P.N.E.U. training and teaching.

It is quite true that the two or three hundred Old Students are not nearly enough to "go round," and that there are many highly educated and trained women waiting to fill the gaps at half the salary.

But all the same, it is not true that a House of Education Student is the first "luxury" of which mothers deny themselves. We know of rather touching instances to the contrary. But if the outside lady should prove herself more obliging, a pleasanter inmate, less fussy about holidays and so on, she *may* succeed in pushing a careless, self-pleasing, indolent student out of the market.

As it is, ladies value House of Education Students in an extraordinary way.—Yours, etc.,

C. M. MASON.

Scale How, Ambleside,
April 23rd.

DEAR EX-STUDENTS,

Last term was quite a short one, only ten and a half weeks, as we "broke up" on March 31st in order to be at home for Easter. We came back for the Summer Term on April 14th. There are now only thirty-two of us, eighteen seniors and fourteen juniors, three of whom are new this term. Nothing much has happened this term, so we will describe the events of last term that happened after our last letter.

Owing to the weather our Half-Term Holiday was put off to Tuesday, March 2nd. It was a very fine day, though there was still a good deal of snow on the higher roads. The following Saturday the juniors gave their play; three very amusing scenes from Dickens. The first, from "Our Mutual Friend," was the supper scene at the Wilfers', when Bella Wilfer, having left the Boffins, returns to the bosom of her family. This was followed by two scenes from "Oliver Twist." The first showed Mrs. Corney entertaining Mr. Bumble, the Beadle, to tea, and her acceptance of his proposal. The second scene showed his feelings after two months of married life. Songs were given by Miss Bryson and Miss Bingham during the changing of the scenes. The whole performance was greatly enjoyed by the audience.

The Drawing-room Evenings after Half-Term were as follows: Mrs. Ewing, by Miss Brooke-Gwynne, and two musical evenings. The first of these was arranged by the Music Monitress, and included several pianoforte solos and songs (both duets and solos). Miss Parker and Miss Gass sang some German songs. The last Drawing-room Evening was the Children's Musical Evening. Miss Parker read a short paper on the life and work of Schumann, and several examples of his work were played in illustration. These included several songs and pianoforte pieces, a violin quartette by four of the school-girls, and a quartette from the "Requiem," which was sung in Latin by eight students and members of the staff in the verandah outside the drawing-room.

On March 27th, the last Saturday of the term, Dr. Hough gave us his interesting lecture on the Ober-Ammergau Passion Play, and showed a great many beautiful slides of the village of Ober-Ammergau, of the scenes of the play, and of the peasant-actors who take the leading parts. We were all very much interested in the story of the wonderful play and

in the impressive scenes which were shown us on the screen. Two hymns were sung, one by the whole audience and the other by eight voices only.

We were not able to play hockey so very often last term. In the first Seniors v. Junior match, the Juniors were beaten by two goals to one, and the return match was also won by the Seniors, this time by five goals to one. Another exciting match was won by a picked team of students against the school, ex-seniors and staff; no return was played owing to the weather.

On the last day of the term a scouting meeting was held in the drawing-room, and Miss Mason presented the tassels won by the Peewits during the term. These were varied, and included a good many scouting and play-time tassels. The chief business of the meeting was the giving of the White Tip to Peewit 92 (Miss Gayford) and Peewit 93 (Miss Mocatta), one of whom has twenty and the other twenty-one tassels. After paying a tribute to their work, not only in tassel work, but as "recruiting sergeants" and testers, our Captain, Miss Curry, appealed to the whole troop to say whether or not they approved of the presentation of the honour of the White Tip to Peewits 92 and 93. The vote was unanimous in both cases, and the two scouts received their badges amid prolonged applause. They are the only Peewits with White Tips, except Miss Mason and Miss J. H. Mellis Smith, who hold Honorary White Tips. The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to Miss Mason for presenting the tassels, and another to our Captain. Towards the end of last term the seniors were very busy doing their sloyd models, which now have to be finished by Easter. This term began with beautiful weather, which we hope will continue.

Wishing you all a pleasant Summer Term, we remain,
yours sincerely,

THE PRESENT STUDENTS.

LOVE AND LIFE.

THE GAP IN ORDINARY EDUCATION.

"'That' and the child's unconscious dream
Is all the light of all their day"

sung a poet, and by "that" he meant love.

Now "love" may be a beautiful if vague altruism, or it may be a devouring flame for possession of an individual, but no life is complete without it in one or other of its manifestations. The danger of modern education is that its administrators are those who avowedly stand apart from love as a part of life. The bachelor straight from college in the Boys' Preparatory School cannot afford "love" save as an idle pastime, the college-trained teacher of girls has very often trained her head at the expense of her heart; when she has not she, however, has generally to ignore the life of love she has not herself been called upon to lead. Fiction is full of hideously vulgar or sentimental tales of flirtations with the governess, enough to rasp any but the toughest and least sensitive souls, and keep them from even the shadows and smiles of suspicion!

Thus the children learn very little to guide them in the most poignant experiences of life. The great Roman and Greek literature given to our boys is full of noble ideals for the conduct of public life—but love is not the inspiring motive, it only appears in its most favourable setting as an amiable weakness and necessity to which otherwise strong characters stoop in moments of relaxation. With the great literature given to girls it is otherwise—especially in the programmes of modern Oxford literature papers and the P.N.E.U.—but mere reading is not enough, a book is only half read which is not discussed, and there the teacher too often fails. Either she "teaches" or she burkes discuss-

sion, lest the reasons for her own spinsterhood be directly or indirectly called in question! To step down and learn, where we ourselves may be as ignorant as our pupils, is a great art—fear of any idea, any manifestation of life is worse cowardice in a teacher than in any other, for how shall the blind lead the blind?

The modern teacher has one great and terrible danger to guard against—the animal side of life as learnt through the horde of pets which the modern child is encouraged to keep. Love as an inspiration, a force to raise, an idealization, and a spiritual comprehension is a very much larger thing than the fondness, tenderness, and physical necessities which we share in common with the brutes. Rather a million times that a child should know the sins and sorrows and triumphs of love through the *Morte d'Arthur* than look upon it from the guinea-pig level—and yet that is what the modern nursery and school-room menagerie very often leads to!

The foreigners who have come among us this year in such great numbers look with amazement on the attitude towards life assumed by the growing boys and girls. They, in England, say our guests, ignore love and marriage; they do not look forward to their possibilities, their privileges and responsibilities, their thoughts are full of trifles! The Continental girl learns to sew, to cook, to have sufficient capability over affairs to be her husband's partner. The English girl may acquire a profession, and may "flirt," but she is never prepared in mind or capacity for her natural sphere, because we choose to eliminate "love" from life.

Thirty years of education by exceptional and gifted women has had an awful effect on the average and ungifted girl. Formerly her "literature master" or her blundering but quite possibly married schoolmistress or the constant atmosphere of her own home prepared her mind and heart

to receive right impressions of life. Now horded in great schools, convents without the religious exaltation which occupies and controls the emotions, taught by undeveloped but intellectual women, learned in everything but living, the average girl faces life with very little conception of its forces.

The saddest failures are not perhaps those whom those forces tear and rend and overwhelm, though those are pitiable enough. More piteous are the modern horde of educated, clever, discontented women despising the snares of love, but making less than they had dreamt and hoped of life.

Exceptional men and women who have real vocations are usually complete; heart and head, love and life realized and in accord.

It is the average output of our schools and colleges—the boys who are trained to cricket, but led to think all interest in girls a little tainted and dangerous, and the girls giving their eager hearts to hockey and good works, who will one day with sorrowful eyes dumbly ask their teachers: "Did you find nothing else in life, could you show us the way to no enchanted city where love gave a meaning to life and life was the beginning of love?"

Knowledge of the facts of life, of the ritual of love, it is surely the sacred privilege of the parent to impart, and the more thoughtful parents of to-day see that and act upon it, but the immediate experiences of the home are at once too sacred and too near to be sufficient for the opening and enquiring mind, nor is such knowledge in the least a realization or necessarily a spiritual revelation. Let "that" be part of "the child's unconscious dream," that when they wake they may smile as greeting what is already precious.